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# VOICES OF WOMEN

an anthology of writings by asian  
women based on the theme  
“called to change — committed to serve”

Edited by

Alison O’Grady

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# Letter from Ah Fong

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Dear

Good day. This is 7 o'clock in the morning. I slept badly last night. Now that my eyes are open, I feel even more troubled and restless. I wish I could cry out loud.

Why do I want to cry? Not for personal reasons, nor family. I need to apologize to you, and ask God for forgiveness. I am not a good Christian. I cannot communicate God's gospel to the people near me.

Last year — no, the year before, — I was baptized, and I let people know I had become a Christian. Some people gave no response, but some asked me, with contemptuous eyes, "Did Jesus bring you up? Did he give you rice to eat?" My heart was angry, so I seldom mentioned the bible, Jesus or God to others.

Last September, I changed jobs — making sample clothes. That is, I make a dress for the customer to look at. If he is satisfied, he would put down an order. In the factory are three girls, and over ten men in their forties and fifties. There are also a few young men.

On a brief occasion, I mentioned God to them. All I got in return was 'nuts'.

Yesterday, Loudmouth, a master in his fifties, suddenly asked me, "Is it true that if you believe in Jesus, you get eternal life, you go to heaven?" His tone was contemptuous. I lost patience, "Eternal life does not mean you are not going to die. It means after you die, your soul will not be destroyed." Another master jumped in for another attack. I couldn't recall what he said. Anyway, we crossed swords in heated debate. There was this young scoundrel, (sorry, I am really angry) who shouted, "Jesus is son, then what's his old man called? His old man is called coconut shell." Everybody laughed. My face turned red, tears about to drop. Why was it that when I tried to reason with them, they resorted to improper satire. A master further said, "Jesus believer is nut. Nuts believe in Jesus." At that time, the bell rang. Everybody rushed out for lunch. I sat in my sample room, very unhappy, eating from my lunch box.

I was about finished when Loudmouth came in. He asked me if Jesus gave me lunch to eat. I said quietly, "He gives me strength so that I have rice to eat." He quickly rebuked me, "Your parents give you strength." The girl sitting next to me said (she's a friend), "Parents give you bodily strength. God gives you spiritual strength." She was good. Loudmouth continued the debate in a

Although I'm a Korean,  
Until now I've used a Japanese name.  
Why, that's nothing short of telling a lie!  
When my mother said to us sisters —  
"Since you are Koreans, you are to use  
your Korean names",  
We opposed her. After all,  
When even now everyone says  
"You Koreans, go back, go back to Korea"  
Wouldn't they hound us even more  
If once changed our names?

But, you know, it was actually a relief  
To use my own country's name.  
From now on I'll tell everybody —  
"I'm a Korean", and even if they don't  
Call me Kyung Ja, they'll see it  
Written on my nametag and know anyway,  
Since I've begun to use that name,  
My friends call me "Hwa San" or "Kyon Chan".  
It makes me so happy!  
But, of course, there are still those who try to  
Make fools of us, shouting "Korean, Korean!"  
It annoys me, I admit, for though I pretend  
Not to hear, it's hard to take.  
Yet I'm a Korean,  
And no matter what they say to me,  
I won't be discouraged.

*Hwang Kyung Ja*  
*Korea*



## I Am A Korean

The first day the children went off to school using their own names, their teachers drew a map on the blackboard in an attempt to gain the understanding of their classmates. With Korea and Japan so close, their people should be the best of friends, they said. No incidents of prejudice or racial superiority should ever be countenanced between them.

Returning from school that day the children's faces were a study in delight. My oldest daughter, in great excitement, told me, one by one, the events of the day. While she had always been fond of her teacher, she began to feel an even stronger bond with her now.

From that day, our quieter older daughter, in particular, grew more vivacious and outgoing. Then my second daughter wrote the following poem to commemorate her name change.



## Intimacy

The lonely dusk comes alone  
the sound of the prayer-drum, echo of the azan  
and God in memory.

This heart awaits Your gifts,  
this life awaits your blessing

Lord  
We await the generosity of Your gifts  
holy beings living in peace under You  
love and happiness between people

Lord  
this heart awaits Your gifts  
my life asks for Your blessings.

*Salmi Manja*  
*Malaysia*

*Ting Ling was a leader in the Chinese movement for woman's rights. She wrote "Thought's on the Eighth of March" in 1942 and was subsequently purged from the Communist party.*

## Thoughts

In this world there is no one without ability and there is no one without the right to 'win the world'. Therefore if women want to attain equality they must first strengthen themselves as individuals . . . .

First, don't allow yourself to become ill. Good health is the most essential thing. Look after it and take tender care of yourself.

Secondly, keep yourself cheerful . . . . Every day we must do meaningful work, study, contribute something of ourselves to others. Loafing only makes our lives empty, weary and withered.

Thirdly, get into the habit of using your brain. Get rid of your aversion to deep thinking and your strong inclination to always follow the crowd. Think well about what you are about to say or do . . . .

Fourthly, have the determination to drive ahead to the end . . . . Without strong determination you will certainly quit half-way . . . . Without a great aspiration it is impossible to resist greed and to avoid becoming a victim of comfort. Only those who work for all humankind, not just for themselves, have this kind of aspiration."

*Ting Ling  
China*

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A survey undertaken brought to light the fact that several youngsters who ought to have been at school were kept at home to look after younger ones so that both parents could go to work. Where there was no older child to look after a young one, the parents in any case went off, leaving the little one to crawl in the dust and filth and generally fend for itself.

Revolutions have to take place within men's hearts before they happen elsewhere. A Church is a holy, sacred place, where cleanly-dressed, well-groomed people come to worship. Therefore, it has to be kept so — holy and clean and beautiful, fit for the Lord. Yet, was it not the same Lord who said that "your temples and your assemblies are an abomination to me". And what does He require of us, but to "walk justly and righteously". Could the beautiful little Church be kept closed and beautiful while many of God's children needed a shelter, needed to be looked after, and needed to be loved and taken care of?

So, after much thought and deliberation, overcoming much opposition and breaking all traditions, the doors of the Church were thrown open on May 1st 1976 to give care and protection to children who come from the slums around the Church. The rear half of the Church is turned into a creche from Monday to Friday, where the children are changed, fed, made to play and sleep, and given good care. Starting with one child, the Centre now has twenty-four children, ranging from eight months to six years.

The vastly improved condition of the children is a source of satisfaction and encouragement. Yet one begins to wonder and question again if this kind of involvement will bring about any change in the lives of those few children. Will they be enabled to grow to their full stature and enjoy equally with all the resources of this world, or is this merely a service which will make no change in their otherwise dreary and wretched lives?

So the search goes on, and those called to serve begin to feel that they are committed to change as well. A "breach has been discovered in their defences. They can no longer stay unsullied in their ivory towers". God's grace has stirred them, and now they may not look back.

*Susan Mathai*  
*India*



# A Creche in The Church

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Quiet revolutions take place without hitting the headlines and without much ado. One such revolution took place in May 1976, when a group of people belonging to a middle-class congregation took the step of turning their well-maintained Church into a Day Care Centre for children from the slums.

Placed in a picturesque setting on the slope of a hillock is the little Church of St. Stephen, overlooking the Indian Ocean. It has been a place of worship for the elite of the area for well over a century. Sunday after Sunday, well-dressed and well-to-do men, women and children come here to worship and praise, sing and pray to the Lord who was born in a manger. Sermons are given, mattins are sung, the Good News is preached. A succession of educated and trained priests come and go — generations of respectable, good people continue to worship here.

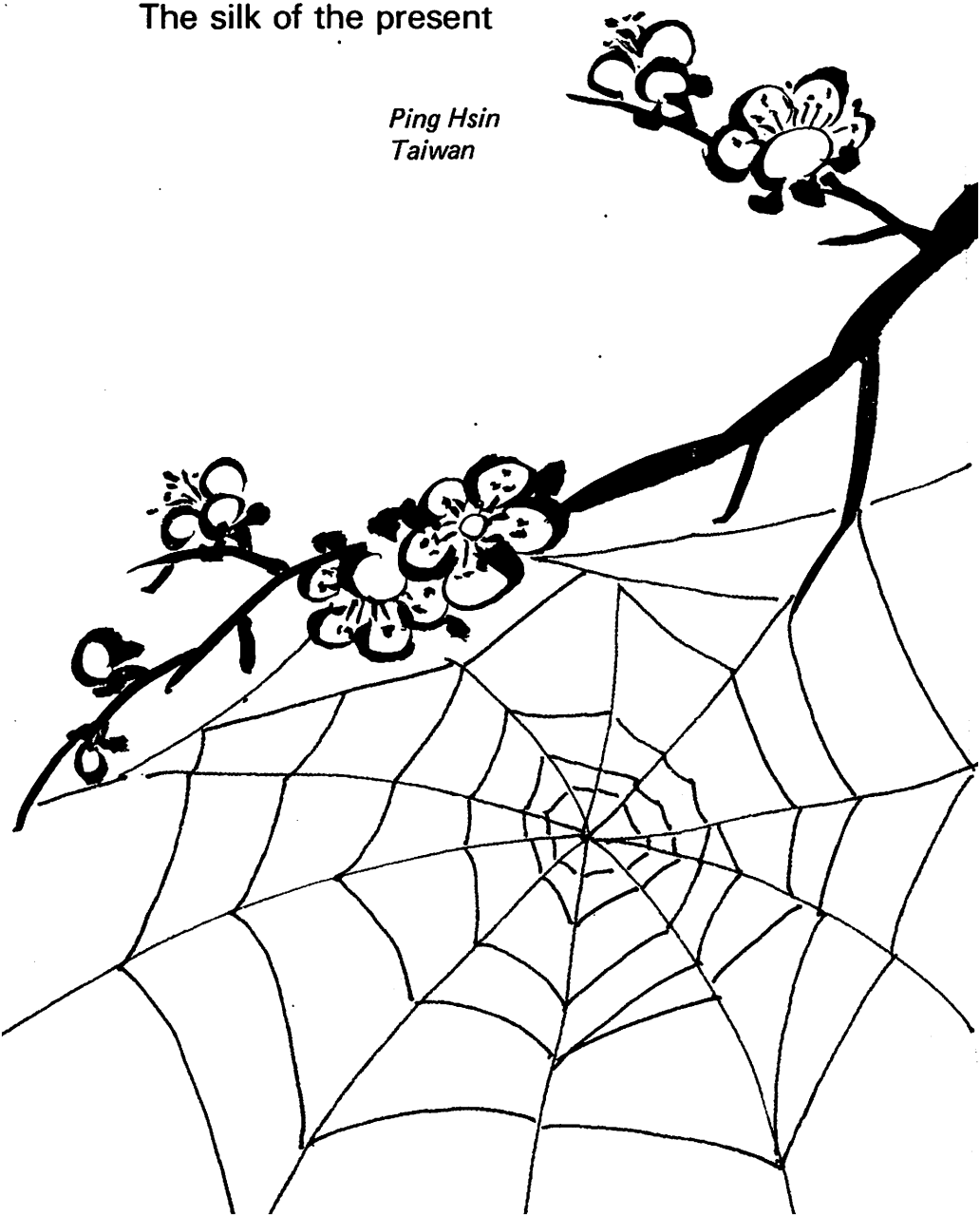
As the years rolled by there grew around the slopes of this same Church colonies of people who came from surrounding rural areas in search of work, and several slum pockets sprang up, where thousands of poor wretched people lived, trying to eke out a meagre existence. But the little Church continued its placid, uneventful and respectable existence, blissfully unaware of its struggling neighbours just around the corner — only a stone's throw away.

However, new waves of thought and new understanding began to knock at the doors of a group of people. As a first step, the need to just meet and get to know the people who lived in these slums was felt, and so a Milk Distribution Programme was begun. About two hundred under-6-year-olds and expectant and nursing mothers started receiving milk every evening for six days a week. The children and most of the women suffered from acute malnutrition and resultant health problems. Members of the congregation came every evening to prepare the milk and keep records. For the first time, the nameless urchins playing on the street corners chasing dogs and kites, with no identity of their own, came alive.

Two years of this programme of distributing milk enabled those who were involved in it to get a little close to the children and their families. Perhaps the wretchedness, the hopeless and blank look of many of the older children, the negative and indifferent attitude to everything around them, left its mark, however small, on the lives of the church people.

How I wish to hold back the past;  
But in the warp and woof of time  
Is already woven  
The silk of the present

*Ping Hsin*  
*Taiwan*



# Women of Pakistan

Our pattern of living in Pakistan today is still strongly semi-feudal and the difficulties encountered by a working woman trying to function effectively in this pattern are far too often a deterrent. An efficient, effective and successful working woman is an edifying example and acts as a stimulus to others; thus it is one's duty to support her, to help her and to provide such amenities as may enable her to function in both capacities — that of a housewife and that of a professional woman. . . .

The family of the progressive working woman plays its own part. Within the family a social change is brought about by the very fact that the mother is a working woman. The cooperation of the husband is essential and the children are drawn into this new set-up.

Nevertheless the problem of bringing together the progressive elite of the urban areas and the rural women in Pakistan still remains. They are for the most part isolated from each other, and apart from the work done by social welfare organisations and now by a new movement for integrated rural development, creating a bridge between town and village, the problem is intense and so far unresolved. In their separate spheres both the rural and the urban women are aware, and increasingly so, of the need for help to strengthen, sustain and push forward these new trends. There are periodic set-backs and the progress may appear slow but, as in all countries of the Third World, change is inevitable.

Our woman lawyers, our teachers, our doctors, our artists, our architects, our designers, our scientists, are not isolated struggling human beings but are an integral part of the world-wide struggle of women in developing countries for the right to work, the right to protection and the right to economic and social equality. We have, therefore, at all levels to extend all material help, all social support and all encouragement to our rural and urban women who seek change and thus help to transform a hesitant gait into a firm and measured tread.

*Alys Faiz  
Pakistan*

# The Prophet

Your soul is a glistening crystal  
Your heart is as pure as a dove  
Your mercy dares not break a broken reed  
You would harm no one  
like a lamb grazing in a green pasture

How meek and good  
how gentle and noble you are!  
Loathing impurity pervading in the dark  
your anger pours upon injustice.  
Cry out with all your might  
a lone small righteous voice.

Not being able to stand the righteous voice,  
not being generous enough to hear the small voice,  
the world imprisons you, tortures you,  
plotting cunningly against you  
says "You must deny your voice."

Crystal clean your soul being  
no deceiving compromise done,  
You have achieved the antithetic great yea;  
the great rebirth of oneself,  
denying utterly yourself,  
to give yourself for the world  
that mourns in agonies of many a despair,  
loving totally, caring for the weak,  
overcoming the power of death and fear.

Upon your pains  
dawn the glorious morning rays.  
In your meekness cries a mighty king of the wilderness.  
For you are the friend of the poor,  
visiting the sick,  
feeding the hungry,  
partaking despairs of the dying.

Yours is  
the surging love  
like the irrepressible ocean tide,  
the burning passion,  
like the unquenchable volcano fire.

Burn! Burn!  
Your soul, heart, and whole life  
in the holy temple of God eternal  
obeying only His commandment absolute,  
defying powers and principalities,  
Your life burns  
in a beauty forever vibrant!

*Sun Ai Park  
Korea*



## Participation in Society

There is some truth to the claim that traditionally women in the Philippines, specially during the pre-colonial times, have enjoyed a rather easy equality with their menfolk. According to Spanish chroniclers at the time of the Spanish conquest, native penal codes like those of Maragtas and Kalantiaw accorded Filipino women with respect and protection "a chivalry unknown in the rest of Asia except perhaps in Burma" (Chirino). Women were not barred either by custom or by written code from assuming key leadership roles in the village structure. Urduja, a native princess in pre-colonial days, is known to have led her people in intermittent wars against Chinese pirates.

It was with the onset of Spanish tutelage that strong feudal male chauvinist values were instilled among the women. A wellknown woman writer Carmen Guerrero Nakpil wrote of women during Spanish rule — "As a young girl she was trained to obey her father and parish priest, to cast her eyes down, to pray the rosary, to be pure, to hide her emotions, to look upon all men as the devil incarnate". All these went hand in hand with the radical alteration of the formerly self-sufficient village communities whose strong traditional bonds of reciprocity and largely subsistence economy enhanced the participation of women in the productive processes. The institution of private property and the abolition of communal land worked to the disadvantage of women.

The struggle today for women's full participation in society can take roots in the Philippines, only if it addresses itself to the needs of the majority of women who are peasants and workers.

*Carmencita Karagdag  
Philippines*

*(Boneta Mabo lives in Townsville, North Queensland. Her people came from the New Hebrides as Kanakas to work on the sugar plantations.)*

## Small — Proud — and Loud

I may be small, you can't see much at all  
I'm only five feet four  
But I am proud of what I am  
I'll always say 'black is beautiful'.

I make myself heard  
When I'm in a crowd;  
I'll fight for my rights  
till the day I die;  
that's why I say  
I'm small, I'm proud, I'm loud.

*Boneta Mabo  
Australia*



So we negotiated with the owners. A lady owner said, "You garment girls can easily find another job. Today you leave my factory. Tomorrow you walk into another factory. Your demands are ridiculous." We became angry, "We have worked here many months, and have made a lot of money for you. Now you want to close down this factory when you have made a lot of money. We should be compensated." We pressed our demands.

One week later, the employer agreed to give us severance pay. But no pay in lieu of notice. We pressed again and again. Finally, we also got seven days of wages in lieu of notice. It took me and other workers fifteen days to get this much. During the period, we only worked five days. The struggle cost us dearly. But it changed me. Before, I had thought that a Christian is to serve in church, to do good private devotion, to be an obedient worker in the factory, to deliver the goods on time and to be kind to fellow workers. Now, I know I am one of the workers. They are in my thoughts. Their needs are my needs.

I have now a group of Christian factory workers who feel the same way. Last month, one of us was injured at work. A big box was thrown at her back. She was in great pain. She rested at home for a few days. When she returned for her paycheck, she found there was no sickness pay. Even the pay for a statutory holiday was deducted from her wage. She protested, and the reply was, "this is our regulation." We complained to the Labour Department. They said the factory did not report the industrial accident. They had no record to work on.

This is a German-owned factory: Triumph International. It produces ladies' bras and underwear, selling worldwide. Triumph has factories in the Philippines, Thailand, Taiwan and Australia. In Hong Kong, it occupies four floors with nine production lines, each with more than fifty sewing machines. It employs over 600 workers.

In this factory, stairways, toilets and elevators are all divided up. One for management and one for workers. We are paid by the minute. Now, it is six cents per minute. There are five hundred and twenty minutes in a day. If we make more than six cents per minute, the rate will be lowered at the next adjustment. If we make less than six cents per minute, we earn less. Paid holidays are often denied on the ground of workers having been sick before.

Back to the worker who was injured at Triumph International. She was injured. She was in hospital for two weeks. After that she rested at home. During the whole period, she had no income. She had to pay expensive medical bills. She used up all her savings. Some workers have begun solidarity organizing at the plant. This sister said, "God doesn't like injustice."

*L. F. Fung  
Hong Kong*

# Testimony

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I was brought up in a poor family. There are ten of us. My father was a street hawker. My mother helped him look after the stall. The money we made one day, we spent on the same day. When my number six sister reached school age, we could not send her to school, because we did not have \$30 each month for her school fees. I was the eldest daughter. I was then fourteen and just completed primary school. So I went to work in a factory to earn an income.

When I was in school ( it was a church school), I went to Sunday School. After I began to work, I tried to go to Sunday service, but I could not go to the youth fellowship or Summer camps. I was very envious of others in middle school. So I went to evening class; I hoped I could be as learned as my ex-classmates.

My mother was very tired. One day, she became sick. So I stopped going to evening class. I stayed home to look after my younger brothers and sisters. Soon, I went to church less and less. My friends in the church were very concerned about my studies. They were not concerned about my work. They wanted me not to be a factory worker. I could not meet their hope. Later, I was baptized. I attended Sunday worship. I liked singing, but I dared not join the choir, because they always sang English hymns. And there were many words. I did not understand.

So I have worked for ten years now. I have worked in many industries: plastics, electronics and garments. Some time ago, I worked in a garment factory. It was owned by three persons. They made a lot of money. They wanted to split up and to start their own factories. So the owners wanted to close down the factory they together owned. But they did not tell the workers. They did not want to pay compensation. So one month before the closing down, they only gave us three or four days work in a week. In the garment industry in Hong Kong, workers are paid by piece. If there is no work, there is no income. If there is not enough work, workers would have to go to another factory to seek more work. In this way, employers do not have to give any severance payment. Our factory had three hundred workers. But now, only one hundred remained. I learned about the closing down from a foreman. So I got together a few workers and asked the employer for compensation. It was not easy. Some workers had three years in the factory. They were entitled by law to severance pay. So they did not bother to unite with us. They did not think about others. Some workers had only a few months in the factory. They thought, "Well, the most compensation we could get is only one hundred dollars or so, why waste time. It's better to move to another factory, make good money and to save breathe." I had only ten months in the factory. The amount of money I could get was not much. But I and a few others thought we should fight for our pride.

So we organized the remaining workers, and asked for fair compensation. We demanded that 1) all workers should get one month pay in lieu of notice, and 2) that those with three months or more get seven days of wages as severance pay, those with six months or more get ten days of wages, and those with eighteen months get fifteen days.



## \*Mining — Yirrkala

It was at Gove at the place called Nhulunbuy that the white men came and settled down to work. My people thought that it was very bad because they came and pulled down our sacred trees that my father's father used for hunting and dancing place. The Riratjingu and Gomaitj own this country.

Wuyal was the wild honey spirit. He made the mountain at Nhulunbuy and everywhere he went he left sugarbag for the people. The mining people put a water tank on Wuyal's mountain. Our people were very sad and angry.

Before the mining there were animals everywhere and it was a pretty place. Now it's ruined. We've only got a few animals, and there are lots of beer cans and smoke and grog and it's dusty everywhere around Melville Bay. There is a special banyan tree called Dhanburama, right in the middle of the alumina plant. The mining men must not touch the sacred tree because it has the spirit of Wuyal in it. There was a big argument about the sacred tree. There was a big argument about the land. Now white people have to pay royalty money to build houses and the town at Nhulunbuy and to take out the bauxite.

A lot of our people have jobs with the mining. We are friendly with the white people and we play sport with the white kids. Some of our people are drinking grog and it makes them silly. Sometimes they fight. We don't know how long it will take before the bauxite is gone.

*Australia*

*\*Written by a group of school-children*

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The youth should seek ways to implement our national ideology — the Pancasila — into concrete action. Only by honest and wholehearted commitment to our state ideology can the transfer of leadership be done in a democratic manner. To do so the people should be motivated creatively.

I am aware that this is not going to be easy. However, the students as the chief force in the University and as a social force in society should play an important role in pushing higher education as a leading factor in creating awareness among the people and in keeping it away from its present preoccupation of preserving the established ethos.

The task is quite crucial for Christian students who confess that Jesus Christ is their liberator; who believe that Christ works, thinks and is concerned with and struggles with the people. This requires a commitment among us to understand, work and act with the people who are still living in a condition of economic, political and cultural oppression. Students therefore must identify themselves with the people and learn from them.

*Linda Sumilat*  
*Indonesia*



# A Student and Society

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The main issue present in Indonesian society is development. But development is not an isolated issue. It deals with the problem of the distribution of the nation's wealth. Furthermore it deals with the question of how people can participate in the process of production through the ownership of the means of production. In general terms, it embraces the problem of social justice, which can be defined broadly as the sharing of the resources equally among the people. This implies the matter of encouraging the people to participate in the process of development.

As a nation we could probably hardly survive unless we are strong. To help the world achieve peace and progress we aim to strengthen ourselves through building up peoples' organisation and working with them, urging them to be aware of their strength, capabilities and ideals. To achieve this end, we have to encourage education for development, especially among the young generation. The students belong to this category.

It seems to me that the role of the University can only become decisive if it shapes its function and mode of operation accordingly. If development is the ethos, there should be a critical question posed to the University as to the concept of development which is responsive to the current needs of society, i.e. to enable people to live in a free political atmosphere and economic justice and with strong faith in God. In short, the University should first of all change itself so it can help the nation move to being a true democracy.



## Please Look Down Closely

As immoral as the promise for peace  
Are bullets and bombs that shatter the rice bowl in the child's hand  
Security even Hell can offer  
To those souls that know of no treason against their motherland.

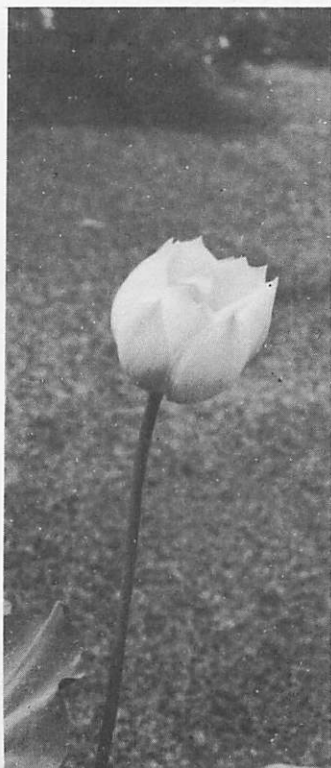
Stop talking of the country  
In terms no one cares to define  
With compassion be generous  
To extinguish the cruel fires.

The old mother does not gather her children's bones  
To build foundation for democracy!  
Packed in the womb of worn out mother earth  
The corpses have no chance to confess their secret wishes.

Please listen to the pain  
As real as when a hand  
is chopped off from the body  
As real as thick forests  
Being nakedly turned to deserts.

Please look down very closely to earth  
To love the quivering voice  
of the old mother  
who prays at night  
To bring a peaceful sleep  
for the child's eyes  
to grow clear and bright  
For the song of the ocean  
to become the music of peace.

*Nha-Trang Cong-Huyen-Ton-Nu  
Vietnam*



# The Wife's Role

The following verses are from Kavyasekeraya, composed in the 15th century. They are often included in school texts (Sinhala Grade 9) and give an idea of the typical traditional concept of a woman. In this work the old Brahmin father gives the following advice to his daughter on her marriage:—

“Do not leave your house without your husband’s permission; when you go out, do not walk fast and see that you are properly clad.

Be like a servant to your husband, his parents and his kinsmen.

Do not admit to your companionship the fickle courtesan, the thief, the servant, the actress, the dancer, the flower-girl or the washer woman.

Sweep your house and garden regularly and see that it is always clean. Make sure that you light the lamps to the gods both at dawn and dark.

When your husband returns home from a journey, receive him joyously and wash his feet; do not delegate this task to servants.

Do not spend your time standing at your door, strolling about in gardens and parks, and do not be lazy at your household duties.

Protect the gods, in your house. Do not give anything away even to your own children, without your husband’s consent.

If your husband’s affection seems directed elsewhere, do not speak to him about it, let your tears be the only indication of your sorrow.

Seek out your husband’s desires in food and see that he is constantly satisfied, feed him and ensure well-being like a mother.

When you go to your husband let it be like a goddess, beautiful, clad in colourful silks, ornaments and sweet-smelling perfumes.

Be the last to go to bed and the first to rise. When your husband wakes, see that you are by his side.

Even if your husband appears angry and cold, do not speak roughly to him; be kind and forgiving. Never think to look elsewhere for your comfort”.

*Sri Lanka*



*Rabi'ah al-ada-wiyah*  
*Sufi woman*

O my God, if I worship you  
from fear of Hell,  
burn me in Hell.  
And if I worship you  
in hope of Paradise,  
exclude me from there.  
But if I worship you  
for your own sake,  
Then do not withhold from me  
Your Eternal Beauty.

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Women are sometimes accused of being strident and aggressive, and sometimes we are. But it is through these experiences that women have made discoveries as to the right place of such emotions as anger and pride in being human. The anger associated with the liberation of women is of quite another order from the negative force it is sometimes felt to be. Structures and systems of oppression are never open and easily visible in society. They operate through cultural conditioning. Sex-role stereotyping goes on in family patterns, schools and text-books, the church, the mass media, and all through society. We grow up accepting this conditioning without realizing it, internalising the image projected on us, an image shaped by male ideology. . . .

In Christianity anger and pride have generally been regarded as sin. But women are coming from a background of habitual self-denigration. Most women will know the agonies that this involves. You see it in women who, when they get up to speak, begin with: "Of course I'm only a woman, but . . .". You see it in mothers who always take the cracked egg or the burnt chop; in women whose formula for accepting something offered them is "Just a little, thanks". It can take the form of destructive ironies or passive withdrawal into the self, into a non-life, into non-being, being a nobody. Against this background pride is unquestionably a Christian virtue, a way to healthy self-esteem and self-affirmation, a form of salvation. I was present at a conference where about a hundred of us were led in meditation by a Catholic sister. At one point in the service she led us to just sit in our chairs and think of the person sitting next to us and then of ourselves as *good*. Something like an electric shock went through us. As Christian women, to really and truly accept ourselves as good was a deeply moving experience. That is pride as a virtue.

Anger as a virtue is more familiar to us. We have the example of Christ overthrowing the tables in the Temple and driving out the moneychangers. It is the same healing anger that is involved when women overthrow the systems of male dominance. . . .

Women today are being called out of the passivity of the pews. Liberation begins as a gift, as grace. Liberation theology by its very nature is an experiment, inviting us to ask questions and explore possible alternatives through action-reflection as we join in the continuing search for human liberation. If we accept God's gift of freedom we are in for a revolution.

*Marie Tulip  
Australia*

# Sexism and The Church

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The form of my life before I took a job was full-time motherhood. I was very maternal and I enjoyed it. Apart from contact with close friends, my way of relating to the community was as an auxiliary — at school, at church, in voluntary groups, we seemed to be always acting as "helpers". A sense of non-being continued to haunt me.

Then in 1970 groups of women all round Australia were asked to comment on the changing role and status of women in church and society. The group I was in asked some serious questions: what do women actually do in the church? who makes the decisions? where does power lie? what do men do in the church? A clear-eyed look at the realities showed us the patriarchal system alive and well in society and positively flourishing in the church. But it was the questioning itself which mattered to us perhaps more than the objective reality it revealed. An honest sharing of our experience as women brought a whole new revelation to light. We all discovered individually that others had the same experience of despair, frustration, nothingness as we did. It was not all our own fault. There was a great release of guilt. We actually were, as women, responding in a perfectly appropriate way to the limited and restricted role and status of women in a male culture. We had not even realized before that the very definition of our world was controlled by men, and merely in response to *their* needs and expectations. What we were doing was discovering ourselves no longer as objects but as subjects. We realized we had been suppressing and denying the experience of our own lives in the interests of an external value system. Now we would no longer accept an imposed authority, whether biblical, theological, institutional or simply of custom. Instead we accepted our experience as women, shared it, reflected on it, and circulated it. And we all found other women suffering much worse discrimination than our own.

In the late sixties and early seventies the questions were raised publicly and controversially, and the liberation of women has become one of the deepest and liveliest issues of our time. There is now a wealth of material, in written form and in a new oral tradition. Women are now talking the issue through and through.

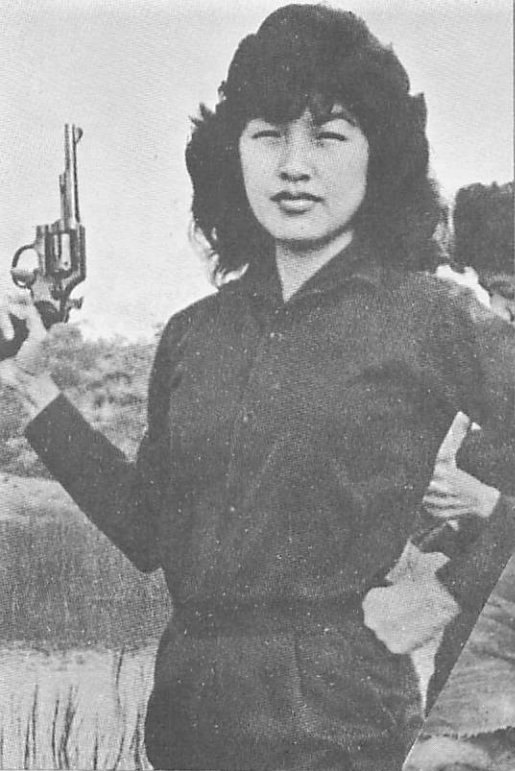
The outpouring of female experience is giving rise to serious studies of sexism in all its aspects, and some of the most penetrating and imaginative developments are in the area of religious life. Women are theologizing in a new way, doing theology by articulating, examining and struggling with what we believe, relating the deepest experiences and meanings of our lives to God and the historical experience of faith. It has been described as communal theology because it arises out of the shared experience of women. The fact that it is grounded in our own history and experience makes it different from the traditional academic style of theology. . . .



## Illiterate

I am forty, or somewhere near, I'm told.  
What I have learned is through my ears alone.  
My eyes see only trees, the sky, my children, the food,  
my meagre wage. In this way I am like all others —  
what is seen by them is seen by me —  
for all but one enormous thing — the words that people  
write and read. These to me are but a bitter misery  
of mystery. When letters I must send, they are written  
by one child, ten, my son. God knows if he writes it  
as I say, or some nonsense of his own.  
My head was never schooled, only my hands, my back,  
my feet were trained to do the bidding of those  
who walk a higher path than me.  
Deprived I was born, starved I will die,  
knowing nothing of any world but this,  
bounded by my unclean ignorance.  
At the end of each stretch of thirty days  
I take my pay and swear to it with one dirtied print  
of my right thumb. Why this thumb is so different  
than any other, will forever be my puzzle.  
It is with shame I press that paper,  
while those behind me laugh, for they take pen to hand  
and proudly sign a name for all to read.  
Who can read a thumb? I vowed that never would my children  
live but half a life, and almost sooner than they walked  
I pushed them to a school. There is no time now,  
at my old age, to learn to read what others tell,  
and content and passive I must remain,  
to see my sons rise somewhere near the sun.  
I hope their skills will be reward enough  
and when they walk their mighty road,  
they will take with them  
their mother in their hearts.

*India*







## Equality

We feel that we now have equal opportunities with men to serve the church according to our capabilities. The only limitation, as I see it, is in the phrase "according to our capabilities". Because women have been for so long considered subordinate to men in church matters many of our attitudes are still those of subordinates. We have regarded ourselves as being best fitted for cleaning the church, raising money by means of jumble sales, cake stalls and luncheons, teaching Sunday School, providing refreshments at church functions. There is no reason why any of these duties could not be done by men, or men and women working together. It is up to us women to see that chores such as these are shared equally where possible. Similarly, it is up to us to shoulder with confidence our newly-acquired responsibilities in the business and spiritual side of church life. The opportunity for full equality is wide open to us.

*New Zealand*

## The Nakaya Case

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Mr Takafumi Nakaya, a soldier of the Japanese National Self-Defence Forces (SDF) was killed in a car accident while on duty on 12 January 1968. Four years later, his wife, Yasuko, was visited by an SDF soldier on three occasions. He requested her to present the documents which would permit the enshrining of her late husband in a Shinto shrine. Yasuko rejected the request by declaring that she was a Christian and attended a Commemorating Service each year at Yamaguchi Shin'ai Church where she is a member and in which crypt her late husband's ashes are kept. Therefore, she did not intend or desire her late husband to be commemorated by other religions. However, on July 5 of that same year she was notified that despite her objections and without her knowledge the service of Shinto enshrining took place on April 19.

On 22 January 1973 a court case began with Mrs Yasuko Nakaya as plaintiff, and the defendants the Nation (the Japanese National Self-Defence Forces) and Taiyuukai of Yamaguchi Prefectural Branch Association (an auxiliary organisation of the Self Defence Forces). The case is called "The Lawsuit of Refusal of Commemorating a Self-Defence Forces Soldier in the Shrine". The plaintiff, Mrs Nakaya, is requesting revocation of the procedure of enshrining Takafumi Nakaya, the plaintiff's late husband, at Gokoku Shrine of Yamaguchi Prefecture, and payment of compensation for the mental pain caused to her by the unilateral commemoration of her late husband.

At least three distinct issues are involved: the violation of the constitutional stipulation that state and religion should be separate; an attempt to force the loyalty of people and to inculcate militarism in spite of article 20 on freedom in religion; and discrimination against women because Yasuko should have the right to decide how her husband's memory should be kept alive.

*Akiko Arai  
Japan*

## For Nelia\*

Why are you so hard? they ask.  
Why do you not bend a little?

They call it grace  
Swaying like the bamboo.  
with the mind.

Listen to it weave  
the music of compromise  
While it kisses the ground  
at your feet.

Even the bamboos however  
could only bend so much.

When the storm comes  
listen to their cracking.  
They break one by one.

You could only bend so much.  
I would prefer to be a rock  
smoothened by the years  
but unswaying.

Why are you so hard  
they ask.  
Why do you not  
bend a little?

*Philippines*

\* Nelia refers to Nelia Sancho, former Beauty Queen of the Pacific, a political detainee in Camp Bicutan.

*4,000 Ewha Women's University students held a prayer meeting on September 23 1974 to press for the release of imprisoned students; by the following day 3,000 signatures supporting the release of students had been collected in this major student initiative.*

## To The Collegians

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We 8,000 Ewha collegians remember the 28th and 29th of November, 1973. On those days we cried out through the night with one heart against the horrible, oppressive government policies, and the extreme disparity of the distribution of the wealth which has created such an atmosphere of deep distrust in our society. Again on the 3rd of December of the same year we cried out at the top of our voices in front of City Hall for freedom and justice in this land. We mourned the death of democracy in this land by wearing black ribbons on our blouses, and we prayed for the resurrection of that democracy. Nor was it only we who cried out. Hundreds of intellectuals and justice-loving people all over the land shouted for freedom. The present regime responded to it with the so-called Emergency Decrees, disregarding the cry of the people.

Since then the suppression has been increasing; hundreds of students, religious leaders, professors, lawyers and civil leaders have been suffering in prison since last April, simply because of having spoken up for the poor and oppressed of the land, and criticized the suppressive rule of the regime. . . .

How long can we collegians remain as cowards with closed eyes, ears and lips? Shall we not rise up from our despair and hesitation and share even one 10,000th of the pain of those still in the cold, dark prison cells, because of their consciences. Let us be of one mind with those who are in prison for the sake of our mother country, and share whatever load we have to with them. Let us now speak up with the voice of justice, with the eyes of our conscience wide open . . . .

We believe that when the basic human rights of the people are protected and assured, only then will the harmony of the people within the country and the recovery of our national dignity internationally be possible. Therefore let us again become courageous Ewha collegians and share the suffering of the prisoners who are accused and oppressed because of raising their voices for the justice and freedom they love so dearly.

*Korea*



# Mother

Sucked into currents of married life at nineteen,  
Your youth and energy were harnessed  
to serve a mother-in-law's sick-bed.

Husband, pushed into background,  
the family machine took over.  
Speculating the promise  
of the bride's fruitful womb,  
they turned uneager  
after the yield of three years.

They required your production unit  
to function again;  
as aids prescribed prayers,  
gave holy water from Babas  
and charms from Gurus.

Like a bucket of water  
Scraped out of a low-lying well,  
a son was obtained from you,  
claimed from birth by each aunt, uncle  
to be the product of their holy effort.

The father made hero  
was congratulated, praised, feted.

The mother was given  
tips on child-rearing.

*Beheroze Shroff*  
*India*







## The Followers

The Christian women of Thailand are like all Asian women; that is, they have been trained to follow their husbands, not to talk too much, and before marriage to obey their parents. When they marry and have a family, in most cases the husband will be the head of the family. This custom still prevails. Even when Thai women go to meetings anywhere, they seldom express themselves. They will just sit and listen to the leader. When the teacher asks if they understand the lesson, they will be silent unless the teacher forces them to answer. Only then will they respond.

When Thailand began its program of development with education, Thai women had an opportunity to have more education. Even with more education, women still hold to the old original customs of mainly listening, not arguing or expressing themselves personally in a group meeting. As for the Thai Christian women, formerly they formed a women's group, but they never had any significant role in the life of the Church and society as they do today.

*Boonsri Ongkasuwan  
Thailand*

## A Thought

Must I like an oyster  
repose in the shell  
hearing only the dumb  
scream of the sea-surge  
outside,  
moving me against knowledge  
and perhaps will  
to new habitations, new graves;  
Or shall I let in, now,  
a small grain of sand,  
suffer its torment  
and harden this sickness  
to pearl?

*Lee Tzu Pheng*  
*Singapore*



---

She had a family of four children and caring for them, her husband and her home gave her a sense of well-being and happiness which she thought was hers forever. In those days the villagers helped each other and cared for the problems of one another. Once when her husband was ill, the people in the village together took him to the hospital at Pirojpur for the necessary treatment. A combination of good and bad days merged into months and years in her life till when she was pregnant with her youngest child. Her husband went to his aunt's home in Calcutta, with the idea of returning in a few weeks. Days became months and he still had not returned. With her baby and the three other children, Suniti's worries for survival turned to despair. In search of work she went out of her home, sometimes finding work, sometimes not. Together with this and her small saving of paddy she survived for a period. She wrote several letters to her husband but as soon as it was obvious that he was not traceable, his brothers started cheating her till soon they were not giving her even her share of the paddy. The task of feeding her children took on enormous proportions. After having lived 23 years with her husband, never worrying about anything, she was now abandoned by him and harassed by his relatives. For seven years she has been supporting the family making cane baskets, sometimes assisted by her eldest daughter. She moved from one place to another in search of work although she had never had to go beyond her home before. When relations and neighbours were no longer able to help her, she was not going to let the old social restrictions keep her from working, wherever work was available. And so she had come forward to do earthwork in the tank excavation scheme.

*Bangladesh*

# A Chance for Survival

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Much has been written and published about the impressive self-help schemes for irrigation and agricultural development in Bangladesh which during the seasonal periods of unemployment give a chance to hundreds of thousands of poor rural labourers to earn food.

An interesting feature of food-for-work in Bangladesh which has received little attention is the fact that women are being employed on an increasing scale — an innovation in a strict Muslim country where social restrictions on women are extremely strong. So desperate is the situation of thousands of women who have been left destitute by the civil war, by the cyclones, floods and social upheavals of recent years that the chance offered by the food-for-work project has met with an eager response.

Many women are forced by circumstances to do hard manual labour to earn a little food for their families. But, considering that the alternative in nearly all cases is destitution and dependence on relatives, it shows that there is a courageous rejection of the hitherto passive role of Bangladeshi women in the face of adversity.

Women who formerly led sheltered lives are willing and able to do the same type of work as men. This is the story of Suniti:

Born into a carpenter's family, Suniti's early childhood was spent under reasonably good conditions; but with the death of her father, when she was about nine or ten years old, she was sent to work with a family in Pirojpur town. She was well loved by the family and felt they were like her own parents. After some four to five years her mother felt she should be married off and so brought her back home. She was married to a man from the neighbouring village, a man with some land which he cultivated himself. Sometimes she helped him but she never needed to work outside her home.



## For Helen on The Occasion Of Her Graduation

You descend from Rahiri  
and Porourangi  
Therefore you are  
A pendant of greenstone,  
A million stars.

Maiden, Woman!  
You have climbed  
Have become  
A mantle  
For your people.

Be strong!  
My yearn and  
Hope is  
That your footsteps  
Have power,  
No matter  
Where you turn.  
Be faithful to  
Your ancestors.  
May the world rumble  
Wherever you stand  
May people listen  
To your voice.

*Arapera Hineira  
New Zealand*



## Vanguards

Our sisters have always known sorrow,  
But with hearts fixed on tomorrow  
They fought as a vanguard for right  
And quickened our spirits to fight.

Our sisters have always known pain,  
But our lives can be ours once again;  
When you've cried overnight in a jail,  
Nothing 'gainst you can prevail.

Despised and oppressed for so long,  
At last we can join in the throng  
Struggling for justice and peace in our land,  
Along a straight road, hand in hand.

*Korea*

*South Korea's growing economy is seen by many to be at the expense of the poor. Those who suffer most are the young factory girls who work long hours for pitifully small pay.*

*Typical of the spirit among the factory girls are the songs they sing, which, in addition to the familiar "We shall overcome" (in Korean translation, of course), include the following two:*

## Temporary Girl Workers

We work for enough to live on each day,  
Without a day off, like the Labor Laws say,  
But the price of noodles, twelve hours' work don't pay,  
So, change our working conditions. Hey!

### *Refrain*

Fellow workers, get it together,  
For prosperity in our land,  
Fellow workers, rise up together,  
To right things by our hand.

When we get our monthly paychecks,  
Our money worries merely grow,  
Most of it\* goes for some rice and the rent —  
Our private debts we still owe.

Lifeless, as if they were poisoned,  
Are all those fine young men  
Who once promised to work hard for us —  
Oh, revive your lost bravery again.

\*4,200 won; approximately \$US12

## Awake

The mountain-moving day is coming.  
I say so, yet others doubt.  
Only awhile the mountain sleeps.  
In the past  
All mountains moved in fire,  
Yet you may not believe it.  
Oh man, this alone believe,  
All sleeping women now will awake  
and move.

*Akiko Yosano*  
*Japan*





# Mother Jesus

---

Ministers are still seen as the personification of authority: "fatherly" figures. Perhaps that is why we need the mystique and the flowing robes. We do not see the minister in the first instance as a "motherly" figure. Well, Christ was male, wasn't he, and because the priest is to act in the place of Christ, he obviously also must be a male; fatherly, not motherly.

Therefore it was a pleasant surprise, and we are all indebted to Maria De Groot for bringing it to the fore, to discover this prayer of Anselm, Archbishop of Canterbury in 1093.

"And Thou, Jesus, sweet Lord, art Thou not also a mother?  
Truly, Thou art a mother, the mother of all mothers,  
Who tasted death, in Thy desire to give life to Thy children".

Anselm was one of the keenest intellects of his time, a prominent spiritual leader. He was also a compassionate and sensitive man. His is the candid theology of a human being who has stayed close to other human beings. Maria De Groot comments: "It is liberating and surprising to find a prayer as Anselm's. These are the words of a theologian on the way of prayer, who discovers the secret of birth and death, which is as female as it is male, in the person of Jesus, the giver of life. In Jesus, Anselm experiences being mother and woman as a reality which gives life and reconciles. The bearing, the upbearing God and human being, reveals human life to us in all its fulness".

What a wonderful vision this is. No longer the paternalistic, authoritarian and hierarchical patterns we have been conditioned to accept as divinely ordained, but rather — maternal, compassionate and sensitive, bearing and upbearing.

Let us work towards this vision, where our hope lies. This is the vision of the future that comes towards us, and that God places at our disposal, it is not just the future that evolves out of the past, but the result of our planning for tomorrow.

We are the ones who are to contribute to the unfinished dimension of theology. We may often feel frustrated by powerful, androcentric, social attitudes. Yet we will never be discouraged or disillusioned for we know that we are together in ministry, and ours is the horizon of hope in God's coming future.

*Henriette Katoppo  
Indonesia*

*In 1973 Chitapur's famine-stricken people received substantial aid as a result of a poem which was printed in magazines and newspapers throughout India and abroad.*

*Jaini Bi stands for all people who suffer extreme deprivation in a seemingly uncaring world, but who receive a spark of hope from humanitarian concern and action.*

## From Jaini Bi—with love

Every noon at twelve  
In the blazing heat  
God comes to me  
In the form of  
Two hundred grams of gruel.

I know Him in every grain  
I taste Him in every lick.  
I commune with Him as I gulp  
For He keeps me alive, with  
Two hundred grams of gruel.

I wait till next day noon  
and now know he'd come;  
I can hope to live one day more  
For you made God to come to me as  
Two hundred grams of gruel.

I know now that God loves me —  
Not until you made it possible.  
Now I know what you're speaking about  
For God so loves this world  
That He gives his beloved Son  
Every noon through YOU.

*India*





## The Hidden Sun

Originally, woman was the sun.  
She was an authentic person.  
But now woman is the moon.  
She lives by depending on another  
and she shines by reflecting  
another's light.  
Her face has a sickly pallor.

We must now regain our hidden sun.  
"Reveal our hidden sun!  
Rediscover our natural gifts!"  
This is the ceaseless cry  
which forces itself into our hearts;  
it is our irrepressible  
and unquenchable desire.  
It is our final,  
complete,  
and only instinct  
through which  
our various  
separate instincts  
are unified.

*Hiratsuka Raicho*  
*Japan*

---

His father before him had also paid the price for going against tradition — in the same kampung. He had been a religious teacher in the kampung. He was so highly respected that no one said a word even when he sent his sons to English school.

But when he also sent his youngest child — a girl — to an English school it was too much for them to take. They had heard of girls going to English school but that was in the wicked towns. Decent kampung girls went to Quran class and then stayed home to learn to be good wives and mothers. For a religious teacher's daughter to go to an English school and learn the evil Western ways was a disgrace to the kampung. Besides it might give some of the younger parents ideas. Many had already followed the religious teacher's example and sent their sons to English school.

So the pillars of society made things very hot for Pak Mat's father until finally the old man packed his family and all their belongings in two bullock-carts and moved to the nearest town.

He lived to see all his children get fairly good jobs. His daughter, instead of "going astray" became a respectable, happily married school teacher.

Pak Mat worked as a clerk in a Government office. The moment he retired he packed his family and all their belongings in a truck and moved back to the kampung.

"I love this kampung," he said. "The people are very nice, but like people everywhere, they think their ways are the best. If things are to change for the better, someone has to take the first step. Someone has to dare to be different".

I went home feeling proud and ashamed at the same time. Proud that there are people like Pak Mat and his father. And ashamed that I, with so much less to lose, have seldom "dared to be different". I am sure many of us wish we had the courage to stand up against group values.

*Sri Delima  
Malaysia*

## Being Different

---

When Pak Mat married off his daughter with a very simple feast, tongues wagged furiously in the kampung. He had a durian orchard, as everyone knew. Surely he could have mortgaged it to hold the customary grand feast?

For weeks after the wedding, people whispered wherever he went. His cronies at the little kampung mosque answered only in monosyllables when he spoke to them.

But Pak Mat went about his business cheerfully, seeming quite unaware of the gossip and the cold treatment.

One day I asked him about it, as delicately as I knew how. He laughed at my clumsy attempt at obliqueness and said: "Don't worry, I am not sensitive about it. I am convinced I am right, but of course they have to punish me for being different".



That the birds of worry and care  
Fly about your head,  
this you  
cannot change;  
But that they build nests in your hair;  
This you can prevent.

*Chinese proverb*

## Bus Girl

---

She is 19, a bus girl, working for a company that employs over a hundred girls. A bus girl's job includes opening the bus door when the bus comes to a stop (the fold-in door is neither automatic nor controlled by the driver), collecting fares from the alighting passengers and making correct change, helping (sometimes vigorously) passengers to get on and off the bus, calling out the names of the stops coming up, and otherwise coping with passengers' questions and complaints. Hers is largely a stand-up job.

Her family is from South Cholla, but moved to Seoul two years ago; her father is a carpenter. She applied for this job and had first to go to a special school run by the bus company for twenty days, at a fee of \$14.45, to learn "how to care for the passengers." She is paid by the day and usually works eighteen hours a day, seventy-six hours a week, though there is some variation depending upon her day's assignment. Her pay averages \$65 a month, and she lives in a company-operated dormitory. Most companies provide free rooms in the dormitory; the girls buy their own meals, usually at the cheap restaurants clustered around bus terminals at whatever times they can. When she is off duty, she is required to stay in the dormitory where the girls are checked every three hours by the house mother. The only exception to this is every other Sunday when she is allowed to leave the dormitory. On these days she goes home to visit her family and to a church-sponsored mission to learn typing and other skills. She describes her work as physically demanding; girls are often sick with stomach ailments because of their irregular eating times (bus lines start operating at 4 AM and stop service close to midnight).

*Korea*

# The Oppressed Women

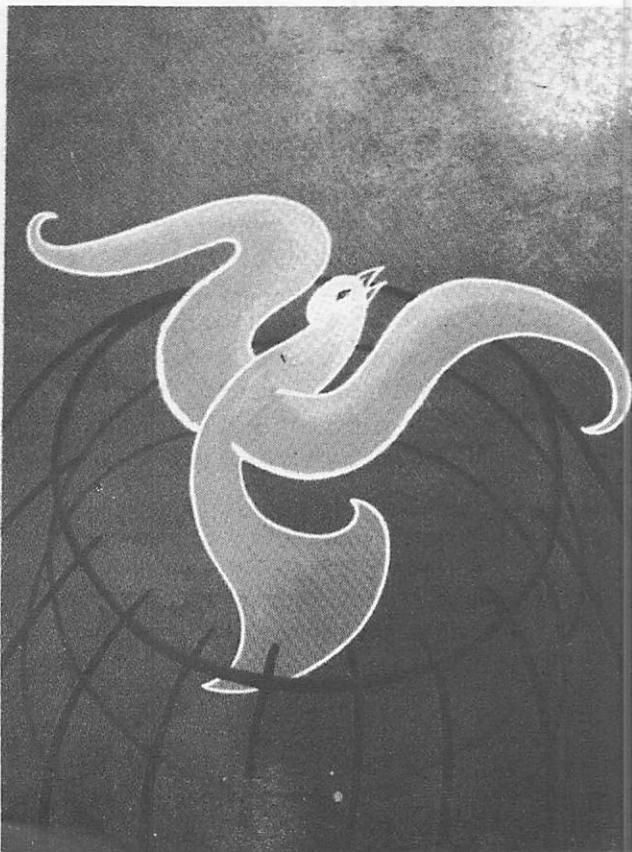
O, oppressed woman  
Think and ponder,  
You have long been oppressed  
Subject to foreign rule.

Why don't you defend yourself?  
Your children are starving,  
Your youngest wails,  
Can you bear to see them suffering?  
Why don't you rise up?  
If you are truly a mother  
who feels and cares?

*Philippines  
folk poem*

*Into that heaven of freedom,  
My Father, let my country awake.*

*Tagore*





---

What needs to be emphasised to both men and women is that life for all will be richer when women's insights, as well as men's, are used to benefit humanity and the environment in which we live.

That we may live together, men and women, with equal opportunity to use the abilities inherent within each one of us is the ultimate hope and goal of all those women — and men — who are brave enough to open their minds and accept the challenge that change offers. Then we will all be able to serve one another in a spirit of acceptance and love.

The material used in this book is only a small part of the material collected. Letters inviting contributions were sent to friends throughout Asia, and I thank those who responded. Inevitably with an anthology there are gaps, but I have tried to include material that is broadly representative of the writings of Asian women.

In this book Asian women are speaking to us with words, with art, and with the actions of their lives. Let us hear what they are saying.

*Alison O'Grady*

# Called to Change — Committed to Serve

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The theme for the Sixth Assembly of the Asian Christian Women's Conference is about the important issues of change and service. This anthology of writings by Asian women has been produced as background material for that Assembly which will be held in Japan, October 1978.

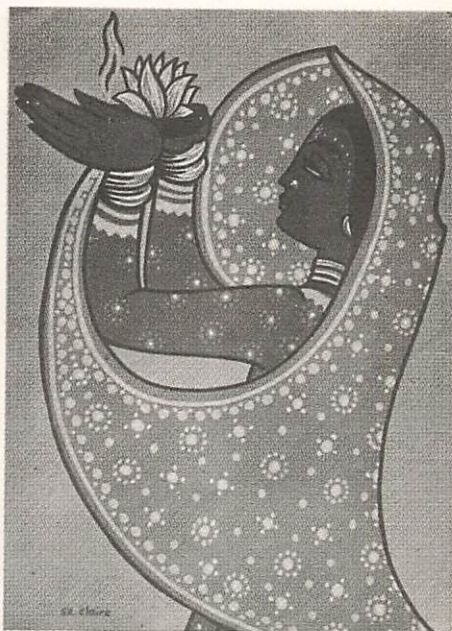
In this book the aspect of change has been emphasised rather than that of service, because women by nature and past conditioning know what it means to serve. In most cultures girls learn from the earliest age that they must serve the needs of their family so that one day they will be equipped to serve the needs of a family of their own. To serve the needs of others without having opportunity to develop their own human potential has cast women into a role inferior to men who have always sought to satisfy their inner urgings for self-fulfillment. Men accept this as their right as human beings. Women are no less human, and also have that right. That it has been denied them in the past is a fact of history, and those women who have sought to exercise their right to be fully human have had to battle against odds which men cannot fully appreciate. The battle has been fought on three fronts: 1) against the man-made laws which place women in an inferior position economically and socially; 2) against the conditioning of the minds of men who take their superior position for granted and feel threatened when it is challenged by women; 3) against the conditioning of the minds of women who have accepted an inferior position in society as a God-given role.

Change is seen as a threat by everyone. Men fear change because they enjoy their present position of power. They fear the insecurity they will experience when women question their own role and seek to have equal opportunities. Women fear change because it demands of them the courage to move against the existing accepted patterns of society and to suffer the consequences of such action.

determined tone. I cannot write out the content. The sum total is that Christianity is an imperialistic weapon of foreigners. That Christianity is to invade into people's hearts so that you become obedient to the church's thinking. Next, the invasion of our country. Loudmouth said, "If Christians are good people, why did they occupy our country, bully us. Ah Fong, you have not seen how they ruined us, so you can say the church is good." He said, "Get eternal life! Lovely lies! What is eternal life?" The young scoundrel echoed his master, "Ah Fong, if the Church could give me 50 catties of rice per month, I would immediately believe."

Afterwards, I feel the church may have used the wrong method to preach the gospel. Why mention 'eternal life' and 'heaven' to those who have had no contact with the church or the Bible? They simply have no spirit, so how can they accept this happiness which can neither be felt nor seen? Also some churches force people to hear doctrines. Hasn't God said when he looks for you, you will be found? Okay, I don't know how much I've written, whether this letter is rubbish or just letting off steam. I have to go to work now. Goodbye. May God keep you and everyone, and forgive everyone.

Ah Fong  
June 14, 1977.



*The above letter was addressed to a staff person of the Hong Kong Christian Industrial Committee. Ah Fong is a Christian woman worker in her twenties.*

Run into the future, run,  
Run into the future, run  
Those who run are creating  
the world of tomorrow.

*Aboriginal Song  
Australia*

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